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to bring all the birds of the village for ransom. The father of these twins explained that neighbours would suffer less than relatives, if left unwarned, but 'their legs would ache a little because we sat with them'. And here we come to an idea which appears in many situations in Nyakyusa life, the idea that contagion is spread through eating together. Relatives of parents of twins are not thought to be in danger until they eat or drink with one of the parents: the ritual is performed so that they may eat together safely. Similarly a murderer and his relatives are thought to be in magical danger from the relatives of the murdered man only if they should eat or drink with them. So too, the bond between neighbours which puts them in danger from the impurity of one of them is the sharing of food.

At the initiation and marriage of a girl, neighbours again unite and identify themselves with the principals. When she reaches puberty a girl is secluded, and her companions in the village—the girls who are her immediate juniors, for the older ones will have joined their husbands—keep her company. Some are her own younger sisters and half-sisters, others are not related at all. Should one girl of the village not join them she is not accused of witchcraft, but it is unusual for one to stay away: to do so would show 'pride' (*umutinge*). These companions (*abapanji*) sleep and eat with the 'bride' (*umunye*)* and share her tasks and leisure, fetching firewood, making mats, learning songs, and listening to the instruction of 'the mothers'. They and the 'bride' go about together as a group and, accompanied by one or two 'mothers', may visit a 'bride' and her maids in another village, the two groups competing in dancing and singing. So keen is the rivalry that formerly, we were told, the visits sometimes led to fighting between the maids and 'mothers' of each 'bride', particularly when the competing groups came from different chiefdoms. At the end of the ritual two of the maids accompany the bride to her husband's house, and spend a few days with her there, sharing the attentions of her husband at night (*vide infra*, p. 83).

During her seclusion the bride avoids her father, whom she refers to as 'father-in-law', and she avoids also all his cross-

* *Umunye* means a girl who has reached puberty but has not yet become a child. She is usually, though not invariably, betrothed, and her 'husband' has a part in the puberty ritual. There is no exact English translation, and we think that 'bride' is the least misleading in this context.

(*ikwongol*) is not confined to the company of contemporaries of the same sex. Indeed the liveliest dancing is before members of the opposite sex, and is often the preliminary to love-making; but full opportunity for display is thought to depend upon living in a village, rather than in scattered homesteads. Some Iyaakyum are colonists, cultivating and building out in unoccupied bush country five or six miles from a settled area, but living out in the bush is disliked by most people and is done, we were told, only for gain. Cattle are said to increase very much more quickly out in bush, where grazing is plentiful, than they do on the village pastures, and the yield of virgin fields made in the bush is high. Hence the Iyaakyum demurs. 'People live in the villages for display, in the bush for gain.' And individuals commonly display themselves as members of a group—a group of contemporaries of the same sex, that is, of village-mates.

d. Decency

The basis of Iyaakyum sexual morality is the separation of the sexual activities of successive generations, more particularly the separation of the sexual activities of mothers and sons, and the complete segregation of fathers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

Iyaakyum informants hold that boys are sent out of their parents' village to build apart so that their parents may have privacy. Mwanamos explained: 'If a boy over ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends, and his own parents send him away. They say, "If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night"; the night is always full of lewd talk, and he may even see them embracing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom! You see at the boys' village,' he went on to say, 'the older boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that's all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn, but we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night, and that is very bad, that is foolishness. But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up.'

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village—they begin among boys of ten to fourteen herding cows, and continue among young men until marriage, but they are said never to continue after that, and are regarded simply as a substitute for heterosexual pleasure. 'A man never dreams of making love to another man'—only of making love to a woman. If a boy's own father, or a village father, finds a son with another youth he will beat him, but provided both parties were willing, there is no moral rule, and the older men treat the practice coherently as a manifestation of adolescence. To force a fellow to have homosexual intercourse against his will is a serious offence, comparable to witchcraft (*vide* Documents, p. 156). Lesbian practices are said also to exist, but we have no certain evidence of this. If they do occur it is much more likely to be among the older wives of chiefs and other polygynists than among the girls, who have so much attention from young men.'

It is in conversation and play with village contemporaries that most knowledge of sex is acquired. Girls learn about sex from their immediate seniors, and they get some sex experience, along with formal instruction on morals, at the puberty rituals of their seniors in the age-village and at their own initiation. Boys learn from the conversation of their older fellows at night, in the boys' village. Any suggestion that sex education should be given by parents or middle-aged teachers shocks the Nyakyusa profoundly, for they hold that discussion of sex is totally incompatible with the respect due from children to parents. The taboo on sex talk between members of different generations appears to be absolute among men, but is less emphasized among women, for formal instruction on morals is given to a girl by her mother's fellows during the initiation ritual, and a young wife of her father, or of her father's neighbour, may whisper advice on sex matters even although she is classed as a 'mother'.

As we have already indicated, there are profound differences between pagans and Christians in their sex code. The Christian dogma that sex relations 'should only take place between adult married persons excludes the freedom of girls to have external sex relations before betrothal, or in the "bride's" hut; it excludes girls visiting their betrothed husbands before puberty; and it excludes homosexuality, which is regarded as a mortal sin. Segregation of successive generations is not a part of the Christian tradition, hence the modifications in the rules of avoid-

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Gulya, Ms Nyanda.

no more." Don't let your in-laws say to us: "You did not bring [285]
her up properly, she behaves proudly."

Another whispered: "When your husband comes to lie with you do not fight him, but accept him. If you avoid him you have a case against you," and she laughed as she said it.

There was also whispered advice about menstruation: "You wait three or four days. . . . When a child appears look after yourself." During the instruction the bride sat with her maids crowding round her, their heads covered by cloths, all giggling a little. None of the mothers made any attempt to hit the bride, though in discussing the ritual a number of informants insisted that 'the mothers do not teach her by word of mouth only, they also beat her' and 'they scold her for all the things which she has hitherto done wrong at her husband's house'. Old Kanisia explained that: 'If the girl is a good wife, then the husband tells the mothers, saying: "You must not scold or cry with, she always listens to me." Then no one beats her. . . . But if she is proud at her husband's then they beat her.' The mother who love her husband says: "She has been proud towards me, she's a bush (*shuli*) girl," and they hit her with their fists.

The teaching as described by a number of women may be summed up thus: the bride is told to fetch relish from the fields, draw water, sweep the house, and she, fetch firewood ('if you do not draw water or fetch firewood you are a fool') and prepare food for her husband when he comes in from hoeing at midday and again in the evening; she must never be proud (*umutinge*) when her husband calls for water or anything else, but always answer with the submissive *ee* and not just say *eh*; she must be hospitable to her husband's friends and her own mothers when they come to visit; she must cook for children and be gentle to them. She must look towards her mother-in-law now—her own mothers are 'just people'. "We have sent you to your husband's house and if we hear of quarrels there you are no child of ours." She is told to wipe her husband after intercourse, to wash her own [286]
body often and to be careful to attend to herself properly when she is menstruating and to wash her hands frequently and not allow her husband to approach her then. She is told not to reject her husband at other times ('if you refuse him he will demand his cattle back'), and she is warned not to flirt with other men. Most instruction in the art of love-making (including demonstration of the correct body movements) comes informally from girl friends a

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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Selya, MuNgonde

●864 little older than herself, rather than at the formal admonition by her mothers, though a little is given then also.[1] She is especially [302] warned to depilate herself regularly. 'If she is hairy her husband will complain to the mothers and they will beat her.' The maids listen to the instruction along with the bride, and since every girl keeps several of her immediate seniors company before she grows up herself, no young woman can be left in doubt as to her duties as a wife.

881 585 At the shaving of the sprouting hair the 'bull of puberty' (*ingombalo jabusungu*) should be killed if the bride is found, on examination by her mothers and those of the groom, to be a virgin, or if the husband has told the women that he himself has deflowered her. Mwasofu's complaint at the ceremony just described was that the groom's party had not brought the bull though his daughter was a virgin, and he insisted that the bride could not go to her husband until it had been provided.

At another puberty ritual which we attended, the bull was duly brought and, after examining the girl, the mothers announced her virginity with the cry of triumph (*akalulu*), and shouted: 'It is ours, it is ours.' They rushed through the courtyard dancing and applauding. Before the examination the bull had been tied up near the mothers, and immediately the joyful announcement was made it was killed. The meat of this bull is divided between the bride's mothers, her father's kinsmen with whom he exchanges cattle, and his immediate neighbours. The ritual portion, the *ijemmapa*, cut from the top of the right foreleg, is taken by her father to his ritual grove of bananas and there he prays, saying: 'You, so-and-so (naming his father), since I have eaten the food of others (non-relatives) may she flourish at her husband's.' Another informant's version of the prayer was: 'I am eating the bull for my daughter, may she bear children!' A third said: 'Here is the meat! I have eaten the food of others, come out a little, may she bear a child at her husband's!'

If the bride is not a virgin the bull is not killed. It must be returned. Informants repeatedly implied, in talking of the ritual, that everyone knew beforehand whether the bride was virgin or not. 'If she is not a virgin we only do a little ritual, there is but one

[532] [1] Our informants maintained that clay images were not used as a medium of instruction, as among the Bemba, though Nyakyusa girls model stylized dolls out of clay almost identical with one shown for the Kisi in F. Fülleborn, *Deutsch Ost-Afrika*, Band IX, Atlas, plate no. 28, 30, 31, 32.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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586 her own father and the chief. A man has the right to divorce his wife, that is to send her away and demand back his cows, if she is dirty or lazy in housework or if she commits adultery, but men do not often demand a divorce for adultery unless it is persistent. If a man sends his wife away for some such reason she returns to her father and he, if he has cows available, sends back to her husband his marriage-cattle, if he has not got the cows the husband must wait until the girl is remarried.

593 857 Into the relationship of mother and daughter economic co-operation and reciprocity enter. The care of young children is largely in the hands of their elder sisters, and the girls also help their own mothers in field-work and in fetching and carrying. In return their mothers cook for them, teach them how to cook themselves and how to make mats.

585 593 Each mother is responsible also for her own daughter's virginity. One of the bulls which a young man brings during the initiation of his betrothed wife is only given if the girl is found on examination to be still virgin, or if he has deflowered her himself. If it is given this bull belongs to the girl's mother to eat with her own friends. But, in spite of her [664] mother's responsibility for her, a girl learns nothing positive from her mother about sex, but from her own slightly older friends; with them she discusses the technique of love-making in detail, but never with her mother.

593 The relationships of siblings are, in general, closer than those of half-siblings, and the eldest son in each individual family is privileged above his brothers. A boy's claim for cattle is, as we have seen, partly based on the time and energy he has put into hoeing his parents' fields; but it also depends, in part, on having full-sisters of his own. When a girl marries the cows come to her father, but her own full-brothers expect to receive these cows, in time, for their own marriages, in the order of their age. Though the father controls the cattle the brothers speak of them as "our cows" and they have an ultimate legal claim to them, which only gross laziness or insult to their father can altogether vitiate. The eldest of a group of full-brothers is the first to draw on these cows and to marry, his juniors wait longer. Full-brothers are bound together in many ways; the eldest, who is privileged, is bound to help his juniors in any way he can, and they in turn respect him and in time give to him some cows from the marriages of their own daughters; 593 and each makes the others' quarrels his own. What chiefly unites them 428 is the law of inheritance, for though the eldest has first right to the cattle from their sisters' marriages, and though the younger ones, later in life, give cattle from their daughters' marriages to him, yet they are his heirs, and all his privileges in time pass to them. When the eldest dies his next

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621 561 others as well. Any boys' village is found to consist primarily of the sons of the members of some older village who originally gave the land for its building, but as we shall see later sons of other villages live there too.

621 342 At the beginning, when a group of boys starts a new age-village, or when boys join one already formed, they do not all have a hut to themselves, two or three friends share a hut. But later, as they grow older, each builds for himself. The younger ones build their huts of reeds, but the older ones try to get a few bamboos from their fathers or senior relatives and build more solid houses. Married men build entirely of bamboo, but often in a boys' village you will find a compromise between bamboo and reed, both being used in the same house; and the houses of bachelors, even though they be all of bamboo, are smaller than those of married men. The technique of good building is not very difficult, and the older boys instruct and help their juniors, as they join the village, to improve the skill playfully acquired as herd-boys so as to build more substantial huts.

245 242 The chief food of the Nyakyusa is the banana; men plant bananas immediately round their huts, though their fields are mostly at a distance. And bachelors, while they continue to eat their main meals at their parents' village, plant bananas round their own huts as well. Bananas begin to bear very quickly, sometimes within a year of planting, and so, soon after the establishment of a boys' village, its members have bananas of their own, which they cook for themselves and eat with their friends at odd times during the day. But they have as yet no fields.

● 864 [881] 577 There is no formal initiation of boys at puberty; but, on the other hand, the custom of leaving home and joining a boys' village is directly connected by the Nyakyusa with their ideas of decency in sexual life. They think it is perfectly all right to discuss sex openly among friends of about the same age but altogether wrong to discuss it either in the presence of, or with, their parents or those of their parents' generation. If a boy learns about love-making, in any way, from his parents the Nyakyusa think that he will not respect them properly and that he himself will be a fool. A boy must learn these things from his immediate seniors and friends. One man said to me: "If a boy after about ten years old stays at home to sleep, he is laughed at by his friends and his own parents send him away. They say: 'If he sleeps at home he will hear what his parents talk about at night, the night is always full of lewd talk; and he may even see them undressing. He will grow up a fool, with little wisdom.' You see at the boys' village" he went on to say, "the older

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boys tell all sorts of stories, especially about women, they discuss love-making and women, and tell tales of their own conquests. The younger ones listen to these things and that is all right in the boys' village, that is how we learn. But we compare in our minds and think that if a boy stays at home it is as if he listened to all this from his parents, and people always do talk lewdly at night; and that is very bad, that is foolishness.—But in the boys' village it is good for the young ones to listen, that is how children grow up."

On another occasion when I told this same man that in Europe many people thought it a good thing for boys to get sexual instruction from their parents and teachers he was shocked: "But I think it is impossible" he protested "for parents to go into detail with their children; there is too much shame on both sides. And if they did, it would damage the children's respect for them."

There is thus a correlation in this society between the age-village system at its genesis and the belief that a boy's dawning interest in sex must be informed, not by his parents, but by friends only a little older than himself.

Few men marry before twenty-five years of age, but affairs with girls begin before puberty. All affairs are related in detail to friends in the age-village, and the younger ones learn by listening; and they also learn when the older boys send them as messengers to the girls of their fancy.

Besides the more serious love affairs which are carried on in secret, groups of boys from the same age-village commonly flirt with any girls they meet on the way, and it is then that the incest taboos are learnt. If one of the boys is known to be related to one of the girls, either through a common grandfather or great-grandfather, his companions send him away: "Don't you see your sister is here? You cannot come!"

Contrary to a general belief about "primitive" societies, homosexual intercourse is common in the boys' villages, between close friends, but there is no real perversion; homosexuality is said to be always *faute de mieux*. The older men in discussion dismiss it with the tolerant word "adolescence," it is never continued after marriage, and all except the feeble-minded get married sooner or later.

But life in a boys' village also gives its members much information and wisdom unconnected with sex. There, as we have seen, boys perfect their skill in building, and there also they learn to argue and express themselves with adult fluency. It is characteristic of the Nyakyusa legal